

THE

# HISTORIAN

[www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.hancockcountyhistoricalsociety.com)

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

May 2011

## COMING EVENTS AT LOBRANO HOUSE

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, May 19, 2011, at noon at the Kate Lobrano House. Guest speaker for the program will be Ron McGee, Assistant to the Director/Emergency Director, NASA Center Operations Directorate, John C. Stennis Space Center. Mr. McGee will discuss the Byways to Space in the buffer zone and the Beach Boulevard Scenic Byways projects. **Reservations are required** and may be made by calling 467-4090. Please call **by noon on Wednesday, May 18**, to make your reservation, to help us plan seating which is limited to forty-eight people, and to apprise us of the number for whom to prepare. The price of the lunch is \$10.00.

## SYNOPSIS OF EARLY HANCOCK COUNTY DEEDS (Book B)

Russell Guerin and Marco Giardino have spent many hours pouring over Hancock County Deed Book B to glean information about early Hancock County with the purpose of providing researchers an easy way to locate the names of their ancestors. A copy of their findings has been placed on our website.



Jean Baptiste Le Moyne  
Sieur de Bienville

By  
Charles Gray

Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, French explorer and colonial administrator, was born in Ville Marie (Montreal), Canada, in 1680. He was the eighth of eleven sons of the wealthy Charles Le Moyne of Montreal. He joined the French navy at age twelve and during King William's War served at the Hudson Bay en-

*Bienville*

1680—1768

Explorer of the northern Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi River, and adjacent lands and founder of Biloxi, Mobile, and New Orleans

gagement against the British in 1696 and 1697 with his brother, Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville.

In 1697 Louis XIV of France announced that he was sending an expedition to occupy the mouth of the Mississippi River. Upon hearing of Louis' plans, Spain sent its own fleet to establish a colony three months in advance of the French ships.

In 1698 under the command of his older brother, Iberville, Bienville sailed in search of the Mississippi River. With two hundred colonists they departed

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# HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Eddie Coleman, Editor  
Pat Fuchs, Publisher

Published monthly by the  
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## LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MONDAY — FRIDAY

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Closed: 12:00—1:00 (lunch)

## MISSION STATEMENT

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

Brest, France, on Friday, October 24, 1698, in two armed frigates, *La Badine* and *Le Marin*. Bienville was eighteen years old; Iberville was twenty-eight. Bienville served as midshipman aboard the *La Badine*.

Sailing around the southern tip of Florida and then northward in the Gulf of Mexico, Iberville and Bienville arrived at Pensacola Bay on January 26, 1699, to find three hundred Spaniards on shore erecting fortifications. Governor Arriola, who claimed the area in the name of Spain, refused the Frenchmen entry but sent out wood and water as they had requested.

Pushing westward, Iberville and Bienville missed the deep-water entrance to Mobile Bay, landing instead on an island strewn with human bones seeming to indicate that a large battle had been fought there. Iberville called it *Isle du Massacre* (Massacre Island, now known as Dauphin Island). In reality, the site was a burial mound which had been opened by a hurricane.

Again, they sailed westward carefully charting the depths and finally dropping anchor in the harbor of *L'ille aux Visseaux* (Ship Island) on the morning of February 10. On Friday, February 13, they embarked in two ships' barges for shore, landing somewhere near present-day Beauvoir. The party followed some footprints in the sand eastward through the channel behind Deer Island and eventually made friends with Native Americans they encountered.

From the Indians, Iberville and Bienville learned of the great river to the west. Sailing westward, the Frenchmen entered the mouth of the Mississippi River on March 2, 1699. About one hundred miles upriver, they encountered Indians, who told them about Henri Tonti, the French explorer who had visited there in 1685 and left the "bark that talks" (a letter) with them.

Iberville returned to his ship while Bienville located the Mugulasha Indians, who took Tonti's letter from a hollow tree where they had placed it fourteen years earlier for safekeeping and gave it to him.

Then, Bienville returned to Ship Island via the mouth of the Mississippi. En route he visited and named Pass Manchac and Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain. Meanwhile, Iberville selected a protected site at the landing he had named Biloxi (present-day Ocean Springs) to build a fortification for the colonists. The log of *Le Marin* notes, "On Wednesday, the 8th [of April], we began to cut down trees with which to build the fort [Fort Maurepas]; all the men worked so assiduously that at the end of the month the fort was finished."

Fort Maurepas became the first capital of that vast country reaching from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania westward to Yellowstone National Park and southward to the Gulf of Mexico. This was the watershed of the Mississippi River that had been claimed for France and named Louisiana by René-

Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle in 1682.

Having installed Sauvole de la Villantry as governor and Bienville as lieutenant governor, Iberville sailed to France on Sunday, May 3, 1699, to report his success to the king. He arrived at Rochefort, France, on July 2.

**On August 25, the Feast Day of Saint Louis, Bienville explored a small bay which he named the Bay of Saint Louis in honor of Louis IX, King of France 1214—1270. Louis IX led the Crusades of 1248 and 1270, dying on his final Crusade. He was canonized in 1297.**

In September, Bienville was traveling down the Mississippi when he encountered two English vessels commanded by Captain Barr who had come to claim Louisiana for England.

Bienville deceived him into believing the French had established a permanent settlement a little farther upstream. Barr, perceiving himself in a position of disadvantage, turned his ships around and sailed down river leaving assurances that he would return later with reinforcements. However, he never did. Bienville had saved Louisiana from the English. The point of encounter is still called English Turn.

Bienville returned to the Bay of St. Louis in December and constructed a fort on the highest waterfront elevation on the Gulf of Mexico. The site is immediately north of the present-day intersection of Beach Boulevard and de Montluzin Avenue.

In January 1700 Iberville had just returned from France when the little French fort called

La Boulaye was built on the Mississippi about thirty miles below present-day New Orleans. Later, in July a party of Englishmen from Carolina arrived to claim Louisiana for England, but La Boulaye was there to retain the claim of France.

The first two years that Bienville spent in Louisiana were probably the only happy ones of his career because he was not yet saddled with heavy responsibilities. Nevertheless, on August 22, 1701, Governor M. le Sauvole died, and Bienville traveled from Fort La Boulaye to assume the duties of governor at Fort Maurepas, a position he held without formal recognition until he received his commission as governor in 1718.

At the end of 1701, Iberville returned to Louisiana bringing news that France and Spain had joined in war against England. His orders were to abandon the fort at Biloxi and move closer to the Spanish allies in Pensacola. Then, he sailed once more for France, never to return to the Louisiana Territory.

On January 17, 1702, the building of Fort Louis on a site twenty-seven miles above present-day Mobile was begun. The first family occupied the fort on March 19. By 1704 the colony comprised 187 soldiers and twenty-seven families. Nonetheless, more settlers were needed. In the summer of 1703, Monseigneur Saint-Villier, Bishop of Quebec, worked to recruit young women of good character from Parisian convents who were willing to be wives of the soldiers at Mobile. By early August 1704,



Louis IX, the  
“Crusader King”

This statue was brought from Rigny, France by one of the owners of Holly Bluff Gardens on the Jourdan River. The statue still stands, but because of severe damage from Camille in 1969, the gardens are no longer open to the public.

twenty or so women, handpicked by the bishop, were shipped to Mobile to increase the colony; however, the ship brought yellow fever with it, and twenty-two of the settlers died of the disease.

In 1706 Bienville's brother Louis Le Moyne, Sieur de Châteauguay, reached Louisiana with the news that Iberville had died of yellow fever at Havana, Cuba, in July. A severe flood forced the removal of Fort Louis from the Mobile River south to present-day Mobile. The new capital was occupied in 1712.

On September 14, 1712, Louis XIV assigned control of the commerce of Louisiana to Anthony Crozat, Marquis de Chatel. Bienville selected the site of New Orleans as the location of the government, and the village was laid out in 1718. As a result the seat of government was moved there from Mobile in 1723. Louis replaced Bienville as governor and installed Antoine de la Mothe, Sieur de Cadillac, in his place.

By 1717 Crozat was unable to make his business venture in Louisiana profitable, so he relinquished his commercial charter to the king.

In 1725 Bienville was removed from office and recalled to France. His replacement as governor, Etienne de la Perier, lacked diplomacy in dealing with the Indians, and he proved to be an inept leader. He appointed a drunkard, Chepart, to command at Natchez. All he did was stir up trouble with the Indians because he coveted a hill where they had kept a fire burning since ancient times. Because he had ordered the Indians off the hill, they entered the fort and killed all of the



A statue of Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur de Bienville which stands in Tercentenary Park at 102 South Beach Boulevard, Bay St. Louis

white men except a tailor and a carpenter. Women and children were carried off into slavery, and ultimately Chepart was clubbed to death and beheaded.

The Canadian, Le Seur, leading seven hundred Choctaws, reached Natchez and rescued fifty-one women and children. Perier arrived, surrounding and capturing about four hundred Natchez whom he sold into slavery in Cuba.

In 1733 Bienville was reinstated as governor because of his knowledge of the province and his good relations with the Indians.

By 1736 the surviving Natchez Indians had combined forces with the Chickasaws. Bienville massed an expedition at Mobile, and in May he confronted their forces at the Chickasaw village on the Tombigbee River. His attack on the highly fortified village was re-

pulsed. In addition his second campaign against the Chickasaws was even more of a calamity because of illness in the form of a fever which struck his ranks. Nevertheless, the Chickasaws mistook his forces as an advance party of a larger army and agreed to peace.

In 1743 and in failing health and advancing years, Bienville asked to return to France, thus ending his term as governor. He died in France in 1768.

Ultimately the Treaty of Paris which ended the Seven Years War awarded England all of France's territory east of the Mississippi River. Such was the end of French rule of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.





*Filles à la Cassette*

Young French  
girls bound for  
Louisiana with  
their  
trousseaux.

## Cassette Girls

By  
Charles Gray

In 1703, twenty young girls, "reared in Virtue and Piety..." had been approved by Monseigneur Saint-Villier, Bishop of Quebec, as being of high moral character. They were chosen because the lack of that quality in female immigrants had recently created substantial unrest in Martinique and Saint-Domingue.

Most of the girls were between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Marie-Catherine Philippe, daughter of Charles Philippe, a prominent resident of Meaux-en-Brie, was sixteen. Marie-Marguerite Dufresne, age fourteen, was the daughter of Charles Dufresne, Sieur Dumotel. Others, like Therese Brochon and Angeline Drouin, were not as well-born, perhaps, but of no less piety. Three of the girls, Jeanne-Louise, Genevieve and Marguerite Burelle, were accompanied by their parents.

The first week of October, the girls and their guardians began their three hundred mile journey by horse-drawn cart from Paris to Rochefort where they learned that their ship was not ready for the voyage. The delays continued until late March 1704 when the first attempt to transport the women to the *Pelican* failed because of rough seas. In fact, it was the nineteenth of April before the *Pelican* weighed anchor and was barely able to outmaneuver an English fleet sent to capture it.

On the ninth of June, the *Pelican* finally made port at Cap-francis, but the women were not permitted to go ashore because of the vile reputation of the port. After seven days spent waiting for Governor Auger, the *Pelican* sailed and narrowly escaped being seized by two English warships, but made port at Baracoa on the eastern tip of Cuba.

Violent seas thrashed the ship for several days. However, on the seventh of July, they reached Havana. The girls were allowed to leave their cramped

quarters for the first time since departing Rochefort three months earlier and were given guided tours of the many shrines, convents, and gardens in Havana.

The final leg of the voyage began under fair skies on the fourteenth of July, but the high spirits of the passengers quickly deteriorated as some of the soldiers came down with a fever and others began to complain of chills and headaches. The ship put in to shore on the twentieth of July near Pensacola to take on fresh water and then continued directly to Massacre Island, arriving on the twenty-second.

Nearly sixty soldiers and crewmen were already stricken, six of whom died immediately following the landing at Massacre Island. On August 4, the travelers finally reached the settlement at Fort Louis.

"The girls were obviously in a debilitated condition, their drawn, feverous cheeks barely able to form even the faintest of smiles. Bienville was there to greet them...If Mobile was not what the passengers of the *Pelican* had envisioned, they were surely too tired and sick to care at this point. They had reached their destination...." [ed. note: *Cassette girls were sent twice more to the Louisiana colony—to New Biloxi in 1721 and to New Orleans in 1728.*]

### SOURCE:

Higginbotham, Jay. *Old Mobile: Fort Louis de la Louisiane 1702—1711.* Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1977.



## Did You Know This about Hancock County?

By  
Scott Bagley

Did you know that Hancock County was at one time a choice locale for certain New Orleanians who opted to settle disputes by way of dueling? While Louisiana outlawed dueling sometime around 1870, some New Orleans residents continued to "cultivate the field of honor" and met in out-of-the-way places where the law would not interfere. Completion of the New Orleans, Mobile, and Chattanooga Railroad increased the accessibility of Hancock County and the Mississippi Gulf Coast, becoming a rather popular location for settling disputes in this manner. One source states that New Orleans "dueling refugees" usually got off the east bound trains at Washington or Nicholson stations near Bay St. Louis.

One documented duel in 1872 was between Colonel G. W. Carter, who had been Speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives, and Captain A. S. Badger, Chief of the New Orleans Police Department. Both the *Bay St. Louis Gazette* and the *Daily Picayune* of New Orleans picked up on the story and provided various details including that both participants were notoriously bad shots and could not be expected to hit the side of a barn unless they were inside with the doors closed. As a result neither dueler's shot hit the other, and one reporter marveled that "some of the spectators were

not struck." Apparently, even with such a result, honor was deemed satisfied, and everybody repaired to the Bordages grocery store to partake of a "sumptuous lunch of crackers, cheese and whiskey." The participants returned to New Orleans in "good spirits" on the evening train after they and those that traveled with them expressed themselves as "delighted with Bay St. Louis, the [lake], the charming country, and the sympathizing disposition of the inhabitants."

The above described duel was apparently typical of the several that took place during this time period in Hancock County. Duelists and their friends would usually leave New Orleans on the morning train and return on an afternoon train, the bodies of any victims being transported in a baggage car. There is no record that authorities in Mississippi ever took action against any "dueling refugee" from Louisiana.

### SOURCE:

Scharff, Robert G. *Louisiana's Loss, Mississippi's Gain*. Lawrenceville, VA: Brunswick Publishing Corp., 1999.

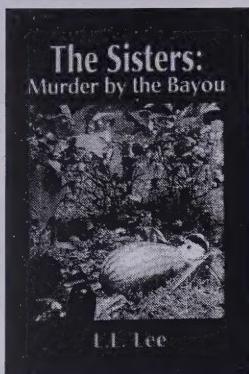
## NEW MEMBERS

The following people have joined the Society since January 2011 or have retuned since Katrina :

**Vernon LaCour and Anne S. Anderson**  
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**Paul Bernard**  
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<b>Raymonda Dennis</b>	<i>New Orleans</i>
<b>Linda &amp; Charles Dessommes</b>	<i>Lake Charles, LA</i>
<b>Martha C. Frank</b>	<i>Bay St. Louis</i>
<b>Jacqueline Gamble</b>	<i>New Orleans</i>
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<b>Gayle &amp; Georgie Morton</b>	<i>Gulfport</i>
<b>Katharine &amp; John Ohman</b>	<i>Bay St. Louis</i>
<b>Mary Olivier &amp; Jacques Olivier</b>	<i>Thibodaux, LA</i>
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<b>Michael Reeves</b>	<i>Bay St. Louis</i>
<b>Al &amp; Margaret Sarrat</b>	<i>Perry, GA</i>

Ronnie Farris McGinnis has kindly donated two copies of her book *My Mississippi Families: Home, at Last* to the Historical Society. They are available at the Lozano House for genealogical search. Or, if you prefer, the book can be ordered directly from her for \$75 postpaid at 1500 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211.



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*One Dog, Two Dogs, Three Dogs, Four...*  
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*Scrapbook of Treasured Memories*  
By Connie Heitzmann and Betty Stechmann (\$20.00)

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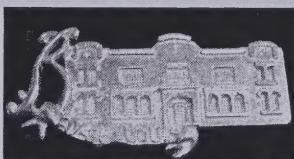
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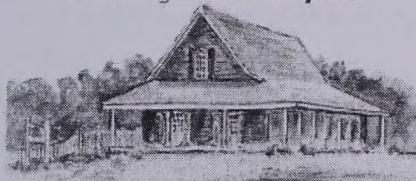


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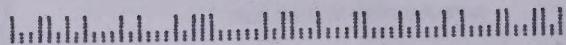
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